

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/24320/budtrap-community-solution-tangled-headphones>

## Budtrap - a community-based solution to tangled headphone cords

Innovative implementation of sharing as a way of cutting costs

by Duncan Geere published on 26 May 2009

On the face of it, Budtraps seem simple. They're a product which attaches to your headphones and keeps them untangled. Nifty, but not exactly a product that'll change the world. However, there's one line in the press release that we were sent that invites a little more attention:

"A new innovative 2.0 concept tackling the world of tangles whilst contributing to the community".

At first, we assumed this was a load of marketing guff, trying to shoehorn Web 2.0 into an unexciting headphone untangling product. But then we looked a bit closer. It turns out that the product is playing second fiddle here to a innovative way of sharing business fees.

Most producers of little gadgets like this end up consumed by manufacturing and distribution costs. It's expensive to build little plastic widgets, and ship them around the globe. Budtrap is aiming to avoid the problem by building a full-scale community around its product.

Instead of paying minimum wage to workers to put its product together, the company hosts "Packing Parties" where fans of Budtrap get together, unpaid (Update: The company has informed me that partygoers are in fact paid), in a more relaxed setting. The company hopes that the fact that it's a social event and a chance to meet people will entice packers to help out.

There are two tiers of the product. A Budtrap, which comes in a variety of colours or with customisable logos, and a "Budtrap Buddy", which is more of a barebones product. Buying a Budtrap for \$5 gets you 4 Budtrap Buddys to send to people across the world.



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It's not clear whether those Buddys get shipped to you or stay "in the cloud" for you to allocate around the world, but it's certainly interesting to see a company apply a "Freemium" business model to a physical product.

If you pay, you get a choice of colours, designs and the ability to give free units to others, as well as a \$1 donation to a variety of causes. If you don't, you still get your headphones detangled - the main point of the product.

The company has only just launched, so it'll be interesting to see how they cope with global demand once they start getting lots of orders. However, the beauty of this approach is that it's very scalable - you can hold as many packing parties as you want, as long as the factory can produce the components.

If you'd like to get a free Budtrap buddy, then you can register your interest on Twitter or Facebook. Send a tweet tagged #findbuddy, or visit the company's fan page on Facebook and they'll sort you out.

We'd be interested to hear what you think of this approach. Will Budtrap succeed through the strength of networking, or be defeated by people's insatiable desire for free stuff? Leave a comment below with your thoughts.